

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on February 1, 2005, in which claims 1-4, 6-11, 14, 15, 17 and 18 are rejected and claims 5, 12, 13 and 16 are withdrawn from consideration as being a non-elected species. Specifically, claims 1-4, 6-8, 14, 15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein, U.S. Patent No. 3,857,645 (Klein '645), in view of Klein, U.S. Patent No. 3,988,852 (Klein '852), and claims 9-11 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein '645 in view of Klein '852 and Boyer, U.S. Patent No. 2,784,518.

Objection to the Specification

The specification was objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Specifically, use of the term "female connector" was objected to. Proper antecedent basis is found in the specification when the female connector is defined as "female connector or receiver 18." *See* Application p. 3, lines 14-15. Thus, the terms "female connector" and "receiver" are interchangeable. Both refer to element 18 and "receiver 18" is used throughout the specification as being synonymous with "female connector 18." Therefore, claims using the term "female connector" find proper antecedent basis in the specification when element 18 is defined as being "female connector or receiver 18," and Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the use of the term "female connector" be withdrawn.

Objections to Drawings

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) as failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Specifically, the drawings were objected to for failing to show female connector 18 having first and second opposite ends, and for failing to show the first and second opposite ends of male connector 16.

As is shown in Figure 3 of the application, a portion of which is provided below, male connector 16 and female connector 18 each include first and second opposite ends, as is claimed.

The first end of male connector 16 is rounded, as shown in FIG. 3 below, and thus configured for insertion into opening 23 in female connector 18, as is claimed, for example, in claim 1. The second end of male connector 16, opposite of the first end, is also shown in FIG. 3 below, and is shown having a radial extent greater than interior feature 52 of female connector 18, as is claimed, for example, in claim 1.

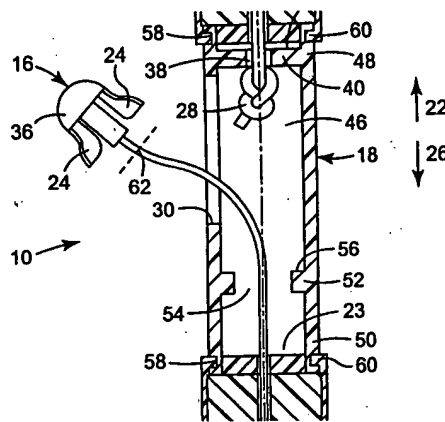


FIG. 3 - A portion of Figure 3 of the application.

Female connector 18 has first end 48 and second end 50, as described in the specification, and as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 of the Application. First end 48 is connected to fishing line 12 and second end 50 is shown having co-axial opening 54 as is claimed, for example, in claim 1.

The first and second opposite ends of female connector 18 and male connector 16, while not labeled with specific reference numbers, are clearly shown in the drawings. Therefore, the drawings show every feature of the invention specified in the claims, and Applicant respectfully requests that the objections to the drawings be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 14, 15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein, U.S. Patent No. 3,857,645 (Klein '645), in view of Klein, U.S. Patent No. 3,988,852 (Klein '852). The rejection of independent claims 1, 14 and 18 should be withdrawn because there is no motivation or suggestion for combining the teachings of Klein '852 and Klein '645. Furthermore, even when combining Klein '852 with Klein '645, all the elements of the present invention are not taught or suggested.

In order to reject a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over a combination of references, there must be a motivation or suggestion for combining or modifying the prior art in order to achieve the claimed invention. *See* M.P.E.P. 2143.01. Both Klein '645 and Klein '852 fail to teach having both a male connector and a female connector as is claimed in the present invention.

Klein '645 discloses head H for connecting leader L with fly line F. A single connector, head H, connects leader L with fly line F. Leader L and fly line F are both connected directly to head H. Likewise, Klein '852 discloses a single connector, connector body 45, for connecting hook 40 to snell or line S. Hook 40 and line S are also each connected directly to connector body 45. The present invention discloses two connectors, each for connection to a separate line, the connectors being connectable to each other. Specifically, the present invention claims female connector 18 having a first and second opposite ends and male connector 16 having first and second opposite ends. Female connector 18 and male connector 16 are directly connected to only one fishing line each. Female connector 18 is directly connected to fishing line 12 at its first end and male connector 16 is directly connected with leader 14 at its second end. Female connector 18 and male connector 16 are then linked together, thereby indirectly connecting female connector 18 with leader 14 and male connector 16 with line. Having no knowledge of Applicant's invention, there is, therefore, no motivation to combine two single connector systems in which a single connector directly connects two fishing lines to obtain a connector system that utilizes two separate connectors that indirectly connect two fishing lines.

Furthermore, the claims of the present invention allow for “passage of the second end of the male connector axially *past*” an interior feature of the female connector. There is no motivation to insert hook shank 41 of Klein ‘852 so far into head H of Klein ‘645 so as to push barbs 51 past an interior feature of head H. That is contrary to the teachings of Klein ‘852 where the “head” is inserted into socket 46 so that barbs 51 do not extend beyond an interior feature of the female connector, but are allowed to grab onto the walls of socket 46.

Therefore, there is no motivation to combine the teachings of Klein ‘645 and Klein ‘852 to achieve the present invention. Specifically, there is no motivation to have two connectors each being connected to a separate line and there is no motivation to insert a second end of a male connector past an interior feature of the female connector. The examiner fails to point out a motivation or suggestion for combining Klein ‘852 with Klein ‘645 in order to achieve the present invention, and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections to independent claims 1, 14 and 18 based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn. Thus, claims 2-4, 6-11, 15 and 17 are allowable over the cited references as depending from valid claims, and the rejections of these claims based on 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should also be withdrawn.

Even assuming there is a suggestion to combine the cited prior art, the combination of the teachings of Klein ‘852 with Klein ‘645 does not teach all of the claimed elements of the present invention. In order to reject a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over a combination of references, all of the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the combination of references. *See* M.P.E.P. 2143.03, *citing In re Royka*, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (C.C.P.A. 1964).

With respect to independent claims 1, 14 and 18, the examiner argues that shank 41 of Klein ‘852 is equivalent to male connector 16 of the present invention. The examiner states that it would be obvious to replace knot 33 in line F of Klein ‘645 with a male connector such as hook shank 41 of Klein ‘852, as “merely one equivalent connector is being replaced by another.” The examiner argues that barbs 51 of shank 41 provide it with a radial diameter greater than the diameter of the female connector (body 45), and that at least one of the male or female connectors is resilient so as to allow passage of the “second end” of the male connector (shank 41) axially past the interior feature of the

female connector (body 45). To the extent that hook shank 41 of Klein '852 shows a "male connector," the connector still does not satisfy all the elements claimed in the present invention.

Claims 1, 14 and 18 require that there be 1) a male connector having 2) a first end and 3) a second end, wherein the second end is 4) connected to a fishing line and 5) has a radial extent greater than the radial extent of the interior feature of the female connector. Furthermore, 6) the second end of the male connector is inserted inside the female connector *past* the interior feature.

Replacing knot 33 with hook shank 41 would not teach having a "male connector" with a "first and second opposite ends," the second end being connected to a "second fishing line." The "head" of shank 41 does not have a "second end" that is connected to "a second fishing line" as is required by independent claims 1, 14 and 18 of the present invention. No "second end" of shank 41 is even specifically disclosed, but assuming that such a second end might be considered to be either the lower portion of shank 41 shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, or barbed tip 40, neither of these is connected to a second fishing line, and it is not obvious by combining the teachings of Klein '645 and Klein '852 how to adapt either of these for connecting to a fishing line.

To the extent barbs 51 of shank 41 have a radial extent greater than an interior feature of a female connector, barbs 51 are located at a first end of shank 41, away from any "second end" of shank 41, as is clearly shown in FIGS. 5 and 6 of Klein '852. Claims 1, 14 and 18 require the second end have the radial extent greater than the interior feature of the female connector, the second end being the second sequential end to enter the female connector. As stated before, to the extent that the "second end" of shank 41 could be considered to be either the lower portion of shank 41 shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, or barbed tip 40, neither contains a radial portion having a radial extent greater than an interior feature of a female connector.

Furthermore, the "head" of shank 41 does not have a "second end" that is inserted into the female connector "past the interior feature," as is required by independent claims 1, 14 and 18 of the present invention. In fact, no part of hook shank 41 is inserted past any interior feature in connector body 45 or head H. It is an important aspect of the claimed invention that the second end of male connector 16 be inserted past interior feature 52 of female connector 18. When the second end of

male connector 16 moves past interior feature 52 an audible "click" is heard and the passage can be felt. *See Application Page 6, Lines 11-13.* Even assuming barbs 51 are located at a "second end" of shank 41, barbs 51 of Klein '852 are not inserted into a female connector *past a particular interior feature thereof*. The "head" is inserted into socket 46 so that barbs 51 do not extend beyond an interior feature of the female connector, but are allowed to grab onto the walls of socket 46.

Even when combining Klein '852 with Klein '645, all of the claim limitations of the present invention are not taught or suggested and Applicant respectfully requests that rejections to independent claims 1, 14 and 18 based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn. Thus, claims 2-4, 6-11, 15 and 17 are allowable over the cited references as depending from valid claims, and the rejections of these claims based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should also be withdrawn.

Claims 9-11 and 17 are objected to as being unpatentable over Klein '645 in view of Klein '852 and Boyer. However, as demonstrated above, Claims 9-11 and 17 all depend from valid independent claims. Therefore, claims 9-11 and 17 are allowable, and the rejection of these claims based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and Boyer should be withdrawn.

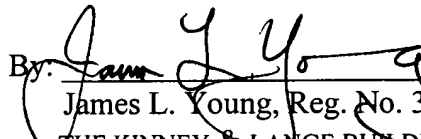
Respectfully submitted,

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